



ALERT

NUMBER 87
March /April 2010

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The Rule of Law

1. DEMOCRATS' EDGE AMONG MILLENNIALS SLIPS

Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, February 18, 2010, 27 pages

The "Millennial Generation" of young voters played a big role in the resurgence of the Democratic Party in the 2006 and 2008 elections, but their attachment to the Democratic Party weakened markedly over the course of 2009. The Democratic advantage over the Republicans in party affiliation among young voters, including those who "lean" to a party, reached a whopping 62% to 30% margin in 2008. But by the end of 2009 this 32-point margin had shrunk to just 14 points: 54% Democrat, 40% Republican. Currently available online at <http://pewresearch.org/assets/pdf/1497.pdf>

2. FROM DELIBERATION TO DYSFUNCTION: IT IS TIME FOR PROCEDURAL REFORM IN THE U.S. SENATE

Lilly, Scott

Center for American Progress, March 12, 2010, 16 pages

The report urges the Senate to adopt modest procedural changes to curb some of the filibuster's worst abuses and make the Senate more responsible. The U.S. Senate has a proud tradition of ensuring that important decisions are carefully weighed before they become law. This has served the nation well at times. But under current practices the latitude granted to individual senators to obstruct does not always contribute to more measured consideration of national policy. In recent years, the Senate has been less and less able to follow the regular order in the consideration of pending legislation, the confirmation of senior executive branch officials, and other work. Currently available online at

<http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2010/03/pdf/filibuster.pdf>

3. THE ROLE OF THE MILITARY IN PRESIDENTIAL POLITICS

Corbett, Steve; Davidson, Michael J.

Parameters, Vol. 34, No. 4, Winter 2009-10, pp. 58-72

The authors, both retired military officers, are concerned by the public endorsement of presidential candidates by retired general officers. They worry that it reflects "a disturbing trend toward the politicization of the American military" as well as a move away from the traditional nonpartisan professional military ethic. They believe that this practice should be discouraged because of its potential damage to the U.S. armed forces, noting that "political neutrality is essential to the military's ability to survive in its present form." The American professional ethic of a nonpolitical military began in the post-Civil War period, and no professional military officer was nominated for the presidency from 1880 until 1952, when Dwight Eisenhower ran and was elected. The partisan political activities of members of the active-duty military are restricted, but these legal restrictions do not apply to military retirees. The authors point out several potential problems to political endorsements by military retirees: civilian political leaders may not trust senior military advisers whom they see as potential political opponents; political endorsements by retirees may legitimize the spread of partisan political politics within the active-duty force; and such activities may undermine the confidence of the American public in the military's political neutrality. Currently available online at

<http://www.carlisle.army.mil/usawc/Parameters/09winter/corbett%20and%20davidson.pdf>

Economics and Trade

4. THE FINANCIAL CRISIS AND THE SCIENTIFIC MINDSET

Cella, Paul J. Iii

New Atlantis, Fall 2009 / Winter 2010

The author writes that what is becoming clear about the financial collapse in 2008-2009 is that the U.S. economy has been driven by a financial system that relies on a complicated structure of speculative debt, that is enabled by modern technology, is totally dependent on abstractions and mathematical formulas and, as it turned out, can only be kept alive by the intervention of the government. On the surface, the development of the shadow banking system appears as a technocratic revolution in capitalism, but on a deeper level is “a failure of the modern mind ... and of the reckless grandiosity of modern technological civilization”. Cella observes that Wall Street was infatuated with “the engineered abstraction, produced by mathematical brilliance and computing capacity”, believing that the untidy reality of the everyday world could be made predictable by their formulas. He notes that this mindset “is singularly susceptible to falsely imagining that ideas are more real than men . . . This is the simple wisdom that modern finance forgot.” Currently available online at <http://www.thenewatlantis.com/publications/the-financial-crisis-and-the-scientific-mindset>

5. FINDING YOUR STRATEGY IN THE NEW LANDSCAPE

Ghemawat, Pankhaj

Harvard Business Review, March 2010

In the wake of the recent recession and financial crisis, global firms must change their strategic approach, says Ghemawat, a professor at IESE Business School in Barcelona. He outlines different aspects and elements of that approach — target markets and competition, products, operations, innovation, organizational structures, workers and reputation. Corporations must adapt their visions to a world where national differences are more pronounced than before and managing those differences is the primary challenge. Thus, companies need to put new emphasis on differentiation of their products and services and look anew at opportunities in underserved segments of the market. Supply chains will have to become shorter, simpler, and more robust, and offshoring, while remaining a valid option, will require a second look in light of rising protectionism. The trend to shift the locus of R&D from the developed world to emerging markets will continue and the use of Web-based collaborative tools in management will pick up.

6. HOW A NEW JOBLESS ERA WILL TRANSFORM AMERICA

Peck, Don

Atlantic Monthly, March 2010

The author notes that the official unemployment figures in the U.S. understate the magnitude of the jobs crisis; the percentage of unemployed and underemployed have approached the highest figure since the 1930s. Despite official pronouncements that the recession is over, a prolonged era of high joblessness is just beginning. Peck writes that it will have a profound effect on the prospects, character and behavior patterns of a generation of young people who are just now trying to enter the workforce. For the first time in U.S. history, the majority of the jobs in the country will be held by women, as the shrinking of the traditional manufacturing industries and trades falls disproportionately on men. Peck fears that the longer the jobless period lasts, the greater the negative effect it will have on the stability of households and communities around the country. Currently available online at <http://www.theatlantic.com/doc/201003/jobless-america-future>

7. HOW TO HANDLE THE SOVEREIGN DEBT EXPLOSION

El-Erian, Mohamed

Financial Times, March 10, 2010

The author, chief executive of investment firm Pimco, writes that the major development of the ongoing financial crisis is the deterioration in the public finances of many advanced economies. Greece is currently the focus of attention, but in time will affect many other Western countries. This development is overturning traditional assumptions about a big divide between advanced and emerging economies; a growing number of the former now have poorer prospects and are more vulnerable than the latter. El-Erian believes that governments of the advanced economies will pull through this difficult period, but cautions that we should recognize that traditional assumptions about economic downturns being cyclical may not apply today, when fundamental changes are taking place. Currently available online at

http://us.ft.com/ftgateway/superpage.ft?news_id=fto031020101453310596

8. POVERTY, DISCONNECTED

Kanbur, Ravi

Finance & Development, vol. 46, no. 4, December 2009

Kanbur, professor of economics at Cornell University, notes that relying on official statistics such as GDP numbers often paints too rosy a picture of the incidence of poverty; economists have long sought ways to provide a more complete picture of the state of the poor. He notes that the Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress, established by the French government, goes a long way to address this discrepancy. Kanbur highlights the numerous ways in which the disconnect between the optimistic picture on poverty painted by official data and the more pessimistic assessment by grassroots activists manifests itself. If the population of a given country is growing faster than the poverty rate is declining, then the absolute number of people living in poverty is in fact growing. Privatizing public services may show a growth in official GDP, but it does not reflect the decline in well-being from the disappearance of those public services. Measuring the per-capita consumption by individual household in many developing countries does not reflect the reality that, often, women and children receive a much smaller share of household consumption than men. Kanbur notes that “there is plenty of work to be done” in helping authorities design policies that enable more people to escape poverty. Available online at

<http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/fandd/2009/12/kanbur.htm>

9. WINNING THE RACE: HOW AMERICA CAN LEAD THE GLOBAL CLEAN ENERGY ECONOMY

Mayrl, Matthew; Mattera, Phil

Apollo Alliance and Good Jobs First, March 2010, 16 pages

The report estimates that some 70 percent of America’s renewable energy systems and components are manufactured abroad. If America continues to import 70 percent of the clean energy systems and component parts demanded by new investments in renewable energy, it stands to lose out on an estimated 100,000 clean energy manufacturing jobs between now and 2015, and potentially a quarter million manufacturing jobs by 2030, according to the report. Currently available online at

<http://apolloalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/03/wtr3-2010final.pdf>

10. THE WORLD ORDER IN 2050

Dadush, Uri; Stancil, Bennett

Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, February 22, 2010, 31 pages

The rise of China, India, and other emerging markets has been anticipated for years by numerous economists, and the recent global recession has only accelerated this trend. New projections for economic growth through 2050 offer insight into the implications of this changing economic landscape. Currently available online at

http://www.carnegieendowment.org/files/The_World_Order_in_2050.pdf

Global Issues / Environment

11. FACING EXTINCTION: 9 STEPS TO SAVE BIODIVERSITY

Roman, Joe; Ehrlich, Paul Et Al.

Solutions, No. 1, January-February 2010

Four distinguished authors outline conservationists' responsibility to defend and restore ecosystems in a world where biodiversity is increasingly compromised by climate change and human activity. They propose nine ways to do this that involve local communities, individual and national economics, biodiversity endowments, and education to increase "bioliteracy." With so many species extinct or on the brink of extinction, the goal is to reach "zero extinction" by returning to good stewardship. Currently available online at

http://www.thesolutionsjournal.com/feature_article/2009-02-24-facing-extinction-nine-steps-save-biodiversity

12. FROM BENEFICIARIES TO CHANGE AGENTS: THE RISE OF WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP IN INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Gill, Kirrin; Warner, Ann Et Al.

SAIS Review, vol. 29, no. 2, Summer-Fall 2009, pp. 23-38

The authors assert that women are unquestionably the largest new international player on the world stage today, and are shaping local, national, and global change in a variety of innovative ways. In recent years, most notably, women have changed from the passive beneficiaries of international development efforts to the powerful leaders that help bring about such change. The authors state that the implications for practitioners of development are clear: focused research and bold policies are needed to better explore the contours of this change, and to maximize the rich leadership potential offered by women in today's world.

13. GREENWASHING HYDROPOWER

Imhof, Aviva; Lanza, Guy

World Watch, Vol. 23, No. 1, January/February 2010, pp. 8-14

Big-dam construction is increasing worldwide, often in the name of "clean energy," yet these projects displace millions of people and destroy precious environmental resources. The authors note that ambitious hydropower projects by countries such as China, Brazil, Thailand and India is leading the upsurge in dam construction; however these big dam projects create significant environmental damage, including loss of arable land, increased pollution in water, rivers drying up, and seismic effects in earthquake-prone areas. Many dam construction projects are also plagued with corruption; many dams, particularly in China, are being built or planned on international rivers with no evaluation of the cross-boundary impacts. In Africa, where climate change is already altering water availability, large hydropower projects continue to be proposed.

The authors encourage increased efficiency, new energy sources, low impact, non-dam hydropower, and other less destructive solutions to electrification needs.

14. UNDER THE WORLD'S GREATEST CITIES, DEADLY PLATES

Achenbach, Joel

Washington Post, February 23, 2010

In 1800, only one city in the world had more than a million people, Beijing. Last year, humanity reached a turning point, when more people lived in cities than rural areas; today, there are 381 cities with over a million residents each. Over 400 million people worldwide live in large cities that face significant seismic hazards, and the author writes that strong earthquakes, such as those that recently struck central Chile and Port-au-Prince, Haiti, will extract an increasing human toll due to the growing global trend toward urbanization. Achenbach notes that it is not the earthquake itself, but buildings, often poorly constructed, that kill people. Currently available online at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/02/22/AR2010022204828.html>

Regional Security

15. FIGHTING RADICALISM, NOT “TERRORISM”: ROOT CAUSES OF AN INTERNATIONAL ACTOR REDEFINED

Tappýnar, Ömer

SAIS Review, vol. 29, no. 2, Summer-Fall 2009, pp. 75-86

Tappýnar, Professor of National Security Studies at the National War College, asserts that while debate over the root causes of terrorism rages in the West, extremists continue to lure destitute radicals to their cause. Counter-terrorism needs to place the breeding grounds for these impoverished sympathizers at the center of their efforts. He believes that a new strategy as well as a new method ought to be adopted to prevent radicals from becoming a threat in the form of terrorism. Fighting radicalism with social and economic development should become the new long-term objective for a smarter effort at strategic counter-terrorism.

16. FOREIGN POLICY IN AN AGE OF AUSTERITY: A CONVERSATION WITH BRENT SCOWCROFT

Garfinkle, Adam

American Interest, January/February 2010

In a “clear-and-plain-talk” interview with AI editor Adam Garfinkle, former National Security Advisor Brent Scowcroft predicts that the U.S. is at the end of a period of growing defense and national-security budgets regardless of the state of the economy, partly due to growing sentiment that other public policy areas need more attention. Scowcroft notes that austerity “might make us think harder about priorities,” forcing us to make decisions that we have put off since 9/11 “because there was enough money to do everything.” He believes that the military will need to better match what they buy with what they need, noting that the services have traditionally favored technology, where they are strongest, rather than plan for the “messy, labor-intensive wars” that are more likely. Scowcroft likens our national-security budget to a bank -- no financial institution can pay off all its obligations at any given time, “likewise, the U.S. cannot fulfill all the claims on our security assets at once.” He believes that we need the State Department now more than ever, because it has to “deal with a world whose population is now more politicized than ever,” and that is one of the reasons terrorism has become intractable. Currently available online at <http://www.the-american-interest.com/article.cfm?piece=733>

17. THE IRAN-VENEZUELA AXIS OF SCAM

Morgenthau, Robert

American Interest, January/February 2010

Morgenthau, former District Attorney for New York, writes that a “dangerous strategic intimacy” is developing between two unlikely bedfellows -- Iran and Venezuela. He notes that this relationship has moved beyond the “courtship phase” of 2005-06 and into a financial, political and military alliance based on anti-Americanism and complementary national assets. Morgenthau writes that Iran now has an established banking presence in Venezuela, and is very likely using the Venezuelan banking system, which is not subject to any sanctions, to move money through the international financial system without detection. Venezuela has significant reserves of unmined uranium, and it is probable that Venezuela could be mining or processing uranium for Iran; in recent years, several Iranian-owned and controlled factories have been built in remote, interior parts of Venezuela, ideal locations for illicit production of weapons materiel. Morgenthau also notes that Iranian military advisors have been embedded with Venezuelan troops since 2006. He believes that the Iran-Venezuela axis has not attracted the attention of the U.S. government that it deserves, in part because their activities overlap the area of oversight of many different agencies, the result being that it is “no one’s job to see the whole picture ... we overlook creeping Iranian influence in the Western Hemisphere at our peril.”

18. THE LOGIC OF THE NUCLEAR ARSENAL

Lowther, Adam

Strategic Studies Quarterly, vol. 3, no. 4, Winter 2009, pp. 8-21

Lowther says that the nuclear weapons of the Cold War possessed by the United States and the Soviet Union served to prevent conventional conflict between the two countries. He speculates that Japan may become the next U.S. ally to develop a nuclear weapons capability, if the U.S. nuclear arsenal declines and its nuclear deterrence credibility diminishes. Lowther, a defense analyst with Maxwell Air Force Base’s Air Force Research Institute, maintains that the nuclear-weapons deterrent effect cannot be duplicated by conventional capabilities. Among existing nuclear powers, he points to Pakistan as presenting the greatest nuclear proliferation risk. The author says diversity of thought on nuclear issues may be divided into two categories: the modernizers and the abolitionists. He maintains that collaboration between the two “is possible.” This article is available on the Internet at <http://www.au.af.mil/au/ssq/2009/Winter/lowther.pdf>

19. THE LONG ROAD TO ZERO

Ferguson, Charles

Foreign Affairs, vol. 89, no. 1, January/February 2010, pp. 86-94

The author notes that a clear bipartisan consensus has emerged in the Washington on the subject of nuclear security. At the same time, however, he poses an important question: In a world where the strongest conventional military power cannot envision giving up its nuclear weapons before all other nations have abandoned theirs, how will humanity ever rid itself of nuclear weapons? Ferguson, president of the Federation of American Scientists, writes of the importance of finding a way to obviate the prestige factor associated with possessing nuclear arms. He says that is what stands in the way of making progress towards President Obama’s dream of nuclear weapons-free world. For more on reducing nuclear arsenals, see: <http://www.america.gov/nuclear-free-world.html>

20. NATO’S NUCLEAR POLICY IN 2010: ISSUES AND OPTIONS

Slocombe, Walter B.; Heuser, Annette

Atlantic Council, March 2010, 6 pages

Internal divisions within the Alliance will complicate decision-making on nuclear issues. The United States and the United Kingdom, the two states with nuclear weapons officially available to the Alliance, have adopted a policy of combining “Global Zero” as a long-term goal, progress in arms control and a diminished role for nuclear weapons, with maintaining a strong strategic nuclear deterrent in the interim. France, the other NATO nuclear state, remains committed to the independence of its deterrent. Several NATO allies, including Germany, seek to distance themselves from nuclear weapons by, among other measures, ending the current nuclear sharing arrangements. Currently available online at http://www.acus.org/files/publication_pdfs/403/NATONuclearPolicy_SAGIssueBrief.pdf

21. OBAMA’S WAR OVER TERROR

Baker, Peter

New York Times Magazine, January 17, 2010, pp. 30-39, 46-47

The author, a White House correspondent for The Times, takes an inside look at the struggle to remake anti-terrorism policy. When President Obama was inaugurated in January 2009, he inherited two struggles: One with al-Qaeda and its ideological allies, and another that divided his own country over what it means to be an American. A series of events involving terrorist situations, most recently the Christmas Day incident in Detroit, has forced the president to question each decision he has had to make, especially after criticism that his advisers, led by his top counterterrorism official John Brennan, who set up the National Counterterrorism Center under former President George W. Bush, were not giving him the best advice. Still, during his first year, the president has continued to adopt the bulk of the counterterrorism strategy he inherited from his predecessor. Currently available online at <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/01/17/magazine/17Terror-t.html>

22. STATECRAFT AT THE CROSSROADS: A NEW DIPLOMACY

Oglesby, Donna Marie

SAIS Review, vol. 29, no. 2, Summer-Fall 2009, pp. 93-106

Oglesby, Diplomat-in-Residence at Eckerd College in St. Petersburg, Florida and former Counselor at the U.S. Information Agency, notes that the severe global economic contraction that began in 2008 has accelerated the transition to a new age of international politics, one characterized by weak but reassertive states, rising powers, waning American primacy, shifting media dynamics, and aroused and empowered societies. This new age of political ferment requires a fundamental reassessment of the way the U.S. formulates and conducts its national security strategy. This article explores the connections between our foreign policy and politics across domestic and foreign boundaries on several key national security challenges. Oglesby recommends a new diplomacy employing public diplomats deeply attuned to the cultural and political particularities of human plurality in the global public square.

23. TAPPING THE POWER OF STRUCTURAL CHANGE: POWER CYCLE THEORY AS AN INSTRUMENT IN THE TOOLBOX OF NATIONAL SECURITY DECISION-MAKING

Heim, Jacob L.

SAIS Review, vol. 29, no. 2, Summer-Fall 2009, pp. 113-127

Heim, with the RAND Corporation, discusses the potential applications of power cycle theory to support national security assessments. The article summarizes how the theory uses the relative

balance of power among states to explain why and when major wars occur; contrasts power cycle theory with other international relations theories; and tests the theory's explanatory power against the historical record. He makes the case that power cycle theory is a compelling and important tool for assessing the stability of great power competition in both present and future scenarios.

U.S. Society and Values

24. CITIZENSHIP TODAY: VICISSITUDES AND PROMISE

Kivisto, Peter

Choice, vol. 47, no. 6, February 2010, pp. 1015-1023

In this review essay, the author discusses the rapidly expanding body of literature on citizenship studies and divides it into four distinct categories: inclusion, withdrawal, erosion, and expansion. In the United States, government exists to serve its citizens. Americans expect their government to protect their basic constitutional rights, including freedom of speech and religion, the right to equal protection under the law, and the opportunity to organize and participate fully in the political, economic, and cultural life of society. U.S. citizens also recognize that they have a responsibility to their society if they are to enjoy the protection of their rights. Americans willingly, for the most part, live within the law, serve on juries when called upon, pay their fair share of taxes, and exercise their right to vote responsibly. Civic participation in the United States also means that citizens respect the rights of others, accept the authority of the elected government, and make an effort to be informed, involved, and invested in their communities and their nation.

25. MAN OF THE WORLD

Morris, James M.

Wilson Quarterly, vol. 34, no. 1, Winter 2010, pp. 28-33

Today, as newspapers are shuttered and reporters panhandle for work, it is important to remember Joseph Pulitzer, whose taste for sensationalism and sense of public service propelled American journalism into the modern era. Pulitzer was a pioneering newspaper reporter, publisher, and sponsor of the high-minded Pulitzer Prizes but he is perhaps remembered best for his antics during the Spanish-American War. His intense competition with William Randolph Hearst in the great circulation wars at the time are still known today as "yellow journalism," the never-ending battle to sell newspapers. It was with his St. Louis-Dispatch that Pulitzer became known both for his gritty, mass-appeal journalism and for his championing of the average American through promotion of a progressive, almost radical, agenda. Soon, he pioneered the genre of investigative reporting to uncover government corruption and abuses in private enterprise. To increase circulation, Pulitzer resorted to sensationalist reporting, the extensive use of illustrations, and staged news "events" to attract more attention and readers. By the late 1880s, his New York World was the nation's most-read newspaper.

26. WAGE LEARNERS

Patton, Zach

Governing, August 2009

Several big-city U.S. school systems serving underprivileged urban neighborhoods are experimenting with paying students to get good grades. The author notes that preliminary anecdotal evidence is that school attendance is up, pupils' academic performance has improved and there are less disciplinary problems; furthermore, the students are not spending the money on frivolous purchases. Some detractors of the program are doubtful that extrinsic rewards can

influence students' long-term eagerness to learn, and object to the moral aspects of paying some students and not others; the author notes that there have some instances of retribution against students receiving payments. The schools and other supporters of the program counter that well-off families routinely provide rewards for their children, and the payments-for-good-grades program is merely providing a similar opportunity for children from low-income families. Saying that "desperate times call for desperate measures", they hope that the extrinsic rewards program will keep kids in the classroom, where they might discover the intrinsic reward of learning for its own sake. Available online at <http://www.governing.com/node/2910/>

27. WHAT MAKES A GREAT TEACHER?

Ripley, Amanda

Atlantic Monthly, January-February 2010

Ripley writes that educational systems in the U.S. "have never identified excellent teachers in any reliable, objective way ... Instead, we tend to ascribe their gifts to some mystical quality that we can recognize and revere -- but not replicate." However, one organization in America has been systematically pursuing this goal for more than a decade -- tracking hundreds of thousands of kids, and analyzing why some teachers can move kids three grade levels ahead in one year and others can't. Teach for America, a nonprofit that recruits college graduates to spend two years teaching in low-income schools, began outside the educational establishment and has largely remained there. Almost half a million American children are being taught by its 7,300 teachers this year, and the organization tracks test-score data, linked to each teacher, for 85 percent to 90 percent of those kids, most of whom are poor and African-American or Latino. Teach for America has found that "superstar" teachers set big goals for their students, recruit students and their families into the teaching process and ensure that everything they do contributes to student learning; however, the most important trait of all is that superstar teachers are incredibly persistent in attaining goals. Knowledge matters, but not in every case, Teach for America has found; graduating from an elite school or having a master's degree in education does not make much difference on classroom effectiveness. Now that the Obama administration is offering USD 4 billion to identify and cultivate effective teachers, the states must take radical steps in the education field, where efforts to measure teacher performance based on student test scores have long been fought. Currently available online at <http://www.theatlantic.com/doc/201001/good-teaching>